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## SOME THOUGHTS CONCERNING FOLK-SONG AND NATIONALITY

By SIR CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD

**I**N the course of a short visit which I paid some eight years ago to the town of my student days, Leipzig, I came upon many features of the change that had come over it and its ways, customs, and aspirations in three decades. In the early seventies it still preserved in some measure what I may call the Sebastian Bach flavour. The same striving and working for artistic and scientific progress of which he was the great prototype; the same enthusiasts, and also the same stodgy Philistines as those on the Town Council of his day, who so worried and underestimated him. Bach, the child of the Thuringian country-side, was no doubt a thorn in the side of Saxon officialdom, and did not mind how much the thorn pricked; but he set the ball of the highest music rolling, and in the last century it was rolling still. Smaller men had at intervals given it a new impetus, which after the war of 1870-1 began gradually but visibly to slacken. Prussian influence began to do its insidious work of centralizing and laying hands upon every interest; turning a valuable number of smaller capitals into quasi-provincial towns, and checking initiative everywhere. The poison was slow but worked with a deadly certainty. The spirit of the "nouveau riche," which entered the newly constituted German Empire with the French milliards, began to affect even the aspect of the towns themselves. Quiet little philosophical and poetical nooks like Weimar became literally cities of the dead: the houses of great men of the past mummified into show-museums, and no great men of the present to provide them with new life. Nürnberg in 1876 was still redolent of the middle ages, their religious and sectarian battles, their simplicity and artistic ideals. In less than ten years afterwards some of its most interesting relics had gone; if subsequent years have seen the destruction which was wrought in a decade continued at the same pace, it will soon have no history written on its walls.

A similar fate had befallen Leipzig when I revisited it in 1906. The authorities had spared none of the old and venerated haunts. The Thomas-Schule was razed to the ground; there was nothing to



show the young citizen that the home of Bach ever stood there. It was not beautiful, save for its old-world flavour, but it had as much picturesqueness as the old many-storied houses in Edinburgh. The church next door, a ramshackle edifice, full of old ghostly galleries, and many-shaped pews, was unrecognizable; restored, as vandals misterm it, in the most spick and span style of bad Gothic. The Johannis-Kirche, where Bach lies buried, was similarly hacked and hewed into up-to-date smug propriety. The Pleissenburg, a most interesting specimen of a triangular fortress, with glacis, moat, and citadel intact and even habitable, was swept away to make room for ugly barracks and mock-Parisian flats. The Gewandhaus, with its concert-room full of associations with the names and works of great players and composers of the past, and its annex in which was the Conservatoire which had trained so many of the present, had shared its fate. The Brühl, a street redolent of Limburg cheeses, and as full of gabardined Hebrews as the Ghetto of olden times, still stood, but with the exception of the one house which it contained of historical interest. That was picked out for destruction and the birth-place of Richard Wagner is no more. For long the central feature of the town, the old Rathhaus in the market-place, was spared, but I hear just lately that the axes and hammers are doing their fell work upon its picturesque fabric. To ask for Auerbach's Keller, one of the first questions of any stranger who knows his Goethe, is to court a blank denial of its existence. The quaint old underground room, with its rough frescoes of Faust and its villainous food, is a thing of the past. Very soon the only venerable relics of the town will be the booths of the merchants at the fair.

The first day of my visit was one of sad bewilderment; of disappointment when the search for some old friendly haunt was fruitless, of astonishment at the ruthless treatment of a venerable town. In the evening I chanced upon an inhabitant, a man of striking personality, a poet, an architect and a music-lover with an interest for the art which had sound knowledge and judgment to back it: of a type not unlike W. E. Henley, forceful to the point of roughness, but full of an ebullient humour which took the edge off any tendency to brutality. I had not talked with him for five minutes before he took fire at my strictures upon the vandalisms wrought by the town authorities, and embarked on a most interesting discussion of the tendency and methods of modern Germany, and the phase through which it was passing. He took toll of long-past history, and traced its effects upon the art of his country. He explained how Martin Luther had affected the whole



trend of culture, and had directed all the forces of artistic aspiration into one channel, music; thereby ensuring the ascendancy of the art in Germany for a doubly long period of time. The only art mentioned in the great Reformer's rhyming tag was music:

Wer liebt nicht Wein, Weib und Gesang,  
Der bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang.

On painting he turned his back, discouraging it so effectively that the German school so nobly pioneered by Dürer and Cranach speedily lost all hold, and lapsed into bad mediocrity. With architecture he had as little sympathy, and any continuity of development became impossible. My friend instanced the grotesque barbarism of the Zwinger at Dresden as a result of this stagnation in design in a town otherwise remarkable for artistic aspiration: and later in his disquisitions he drew an interesting parallel between this building and some later musical developments, which I will refer to in its proper place.

He laid stress on the historical position of music in the various countries of Europe from the 15th century on, pointing out the fact that each nation had in turn enjoyed a period of commanding superiority, the Netherlands, the Italians, the English, and after them the Germans; the periods of the first three named being about equal, but the Germans, thanks to Luther, having reigned for double the time allotted to the others. The English period was, in his opinion, cut short by the influence of the Puritans, who discouraged music as much as Luther encouraged it, but who, by abstaining from interference with painting, enabled the art to go on its way developing up to this day. That the music-spirit was not wholly crushed was evident by the rise of Purcell after the Restoration, but its efforts for national revival were cut short by the invasion of the great personality of George Frederic Handel, one of the first great figures of the German supremacy. Unlike the Netherland and Italian schools, the English school did not die of senile decay. It was left only in a state of suspended animation, just after its most brilliant figure, Henry Purcell, had completed his short career. That it would come again into its kingdom, my friend looked upon as certain.

The German period, and he frankly volunteered the admission, ended its prosperity and usefulness with its highest development of opera in Wagner and the climax of symphonic and absolute music in Brahms. It then exhausted itself and had nothing more to say. The nation must be content, he said, to go to sleep and to wait for its next resurrection of energy, which would come when it



had once more absorbed a good and persistent diet of the folk-song which was its backbone. He then applied the architectural vagaries of the Zwinger to show how the signs of tiredness affected both arts in a similar way. The proof of approaching decay was the gradual exaltation of detail over design. The carving of the capitals might be all that could be desired, but if it distracted the eye from the general grouping, the artistic value was *nil*. The next step would be the use of detail, and of all the embellishments and meretriciousness of which it is capable, to conceal the inherent poverty in a design: the obliteration of big lines, of simple grandeur, and of perfect proportions. The Parthenon did not need other than plain Doric columns. As the decadence of Greek architecture showed itself as soon as ornate decoration began to get the upper hand, so was the art of Bach and of Beethoven showing in its latest German forms, as exemplified now particularly by Richard Strauss, a similar down-hill tendency. The big line, melody, most important of all, was becoming a consideration quite secondary to the setting in which it was placed: as a natural consequence, its continuity and swing were gone; little snaps of theme taking the place of extended phrase, and even these lost in the welter of orchestral colour and the sonority, not to say noise, produced by modern musical machinery. In other modern German composers, who in style and expression are totally different from Strauss, such as Max Reger, there is precisely the same overinsistence upon elaboration of details at the expense of invention. He traced, and I think with a truth which must be becoming apparent to all who hear, mark and study, how the successive works of Strauss showed more and more the subordination of invention to craftsmanship. The power of writing a theme of value, such as was shown in 'Don Juan,' and so promisingly as to lead one to hope that it was a beginning of great things, disappeared more and more as his later works came to the birth: and one of the most heralded of them, 'Heldenleben', exists admittedly on themes which he wrote in earlier days. When an animal takes to the habit of devouring its own progeny, there is but little chance of the survival of the race. The hope for Germany, he said, was that she should be content to go to rest and to wake up with a simple mind. She ought not to complain, having had a double portion of the usual period of supremacy allotted to any nation.

From Germany he turned to the question of the nations which were most likely to get their turn. His anticipation was that there were two, Russia and Great Britain: or to put it more broadly, the Slavonic and the Anglo-Saxon-Keltic races. His



opinion on this point, curiously enough, coincided with that of Brahms expressed some ten years before, but of which, until I told him of it, he was ignorant. Speaking to an intimate friend of his and mine, not long before his death, Brahms was lamenting the musical prospects of his own country. He looked round and saw nothing. The schools of composition were so hidebound that they were turning out two classes of as widely different characteristics as Conservatives and Anarchists; both coming from the same primary cause, red-tape teaching. Those who succumbed becoming Philistines, those who kicked against the pricks becoming Revolutionaries. Between them both healthy progress was being hopelessly manacled. "Over there," he said, pointing towards England, "things are different. Something will come out of that country. And over there," pointing towards Russia, "there is great movement." Brahms fixed his judgment upon the results of a broad-minded system of education. Therein he was partially right, but the basic condition was to my mind more convincingly brought out by my Leipzig friend. Brahms could scarcely, as a worker immersed in his own creation, imagine that after him German music would be tired out. He was all his life occupied in keeping it alive and in prime condition. Only the intelligent onlooker could see that he was the last rose of a long summer. The rose-tree is not dead, far from it, but it is hibernating and must be patient in the process. Plenty of winter and spring weeds will spring up in the meantime: but it need not hurry, and a premature effort to put forth leaves or buds might be nipped by a cold blast.

The case of France is a very peculiar one. She possesses no commanding peaks, and no deep valleys. From the days of Rameau and Couperin she has consistently preserved an even tenour of uniform refinement and delicate touch. She has never produced giants of the calibre of Palestrina, Bach or Beethoven: neither has she ever indulged in or permitted lapses into unredeemed vulgarity. Such examples of coarseness as are to be found are not labelled with French names: they are the work of imported aliens. Her influence upon them was so strong as to put a veneer of finesse over their banalities. It is not in her sunny nature to be musically deep; but she is brilliant and inventive to the last degree. When a Frenchman tries to be big, as Berlioz undoubtedly did, the very brilliancy and inventiveness of his nature is apt to blind him to the power of simple beauty. Berlioz' dramatic gifts militated against his spontaneity of utterance, and he aimed so much at effectiveness in performance as to lose sight of the deeper



results of natural and uncalculated expression. In the Frenchman, as in the modern Italian, the footlights are the influence which overrides all other considerations: and *au fond* the theatre plays a large part in the output: in Italy an overwhelming part. Modern France is showing signs of shaking herself free of the stage, but it may take some generations to build up a school of absolute music such as was soundly laid in Germany by Emmanuel Bach and Haydn. It is of the highest significance however that this later French development has its beginnings in French folk-song.

The kernel of my friend's discourse was as sound in principle as it was invaluable and stimulating in practise, the vital necessity of folk-song to a nation and of founding its creative output upon a basis of full knowledge of the characteristics and atmosphere of their style. It was in effect a modern German application of Verdi's immortal dictum "Torniamo all' antico." There is no diet so life-giving and so life-preserving as the natural out-pouring of the songs of the soil. They have the sanctity of age coupled with the buoyancy of youth. As far as any art-work can be, they are in their nature immortal. Their claim to immortality is founded on their spontaneity of utterance and their inherent sincerity. There is no flummery or sophistication about them. They do not scruple to be coarse, and are not ashamed to be refined, when the sentiment or the environment demands. How well and truly they represent the spirit and tendencies of a nation is obvious even to the least tutored ear. To study and follow out fully from the matrix their multifarious qualities is fascinating, but needs volumes rather than pages. It is hardly within the scope of an article to do more than indicate some of the more striking features which crop up in the course of studying them: and the writer's own country as a natural result be the one upon which he can most intimately speak.

The main streams of folk-music are three in number, the Keltic, the Slavonic and the Germanic. The lesser rivers, many of which have characteristics as striking as the greater and broader streams, are the Hungarian, the Tyrolean, the Spanish, the Scandinavian, the Italian, and the French (as distinct from the Breton which belongs to the Keltic branch.) The essentially English folk-song has a certain affinity with the Germanic, although much of it, for geographical and political reasons, has become permeated with Keltic influence. The literature of Keltic folk-song is by far the largest of all: and it is also the most varied, covering every conceivable kind of interest, agricultural, military, saltatory, amative, narrative, humorous and so forth. Its branches are many: Highland Scotch, Lowland Scotch, Irish (the largest literature



which exists), Welsh, Cornish, Manx and Breton. Its origin is lost in antiquity, and by some learned ethnographical pundits a connection has been traced between it and the music of India. Dr. George Petrie, who personally collected an enormous mass of Irish folk-music, some 2,000 specimens of which, happily, are now published and within the public reach, found a striking resemblance between Indian and Irish lullabies. The present writer has often been surprised by the similarity between Hungarian and Irish folk-song: a similarity which may be due to a joint Oriental origin. This comes out very markedly in the relationship of the commonest form of Irish cadence, a three-fold reiteration of the keynote,—



and the commonest of the Hungarian, which is only a variation of the simpler form. In a tune, which I arranged under the name of 'a Battle Hymn' in "Songs of Old Ireland," the relationship to Magyarland is still more marked, e. g. at the close where even the Hungarian ornaments are observable. In the third strain of a tune called 'The lament of Owen Roe O'Neill' there occurs a still more strikingly Hungarian passage:



(The accidentals are Petrie's, and he was very accurate and musicianlike in transcription.)

It is well known that the ornaments in Hungarian music are mostly the work of the Gipsy element (i. e., the Oriental), and in all probability the original simple cadence, before the Gipsies incrustated it with figurations, was the same as the Keltic. Is it not possible that the Phoenicians were the importers of Keltic music? Orientals themselves, their visits to Ireland in the dim past may have left their musical mark behind, as to a lesser extent, the survivors from wrecks of the Spanish Armada did in other directions in more recent times. The Gipsies, who are very ancient inhabitants of India, may presumably have also had their influence upon the Phoenicians before they fared westwards. Petrie's surmise, then, may not be without ethnographical value.

I have often wondered why students of early ornamental work have not turned their attention to the origin of typical Keltic design, such as the interlacing letters of the Book of Kells,



the Irish manuscripts in the monastery of St. Gall, and the numerous sculptured crosses, and endeavoured to investigate whether it shows any relationship with Eastern work, especially Indian. The curves and intertwinings, unmistakably characteristic of the style, have a certain resemblance to the lines of Keltic melody. If the plastic work also had its origin in the East, the analogy, hinted at by Petrie, would become tenfold more convincing. It is significant that the most striking Keltic tunes come from the coast, such as Antrim, or from islands off the mainland, such as Arranmore, where Petrie found a perfect mine of musical wealth.

The following air, 'Loved bride of O'Beirne,' is a specimen of the finest type of wild Keltic imagination, and is only one of many of the same calibre, all well-ordered in structure, with their rhythmical balance accurately preserved, and with an entirely astonishing sense of powerful climax:



This is of the sort known as *Caoines* (Keens) or Laments. One of the best of its sisters is a tune arranged by me in 'Irish songs and Ballads' under the name of 'Chieftain of Tyrconnell,' which in Petrie's collection is called by a more homely name, 'The old woman's lament for her hen.' Martial tunes are usually to be found in 3/4 or in 6/8 rhythm. One called 'Leatherbags Donnell' will illustrate the style:



The first few bars of a marching tune from Ulster will show the effect of a 6/8 rhythm:



It is not always easy to differentiate between Irish jigs and marches. The character of the music itself is the only safe guide. The jig rhythm is always 6/8, but rapid in tempo, and often infinite,



i. e., devoid of any ending, and perpetually repeating itself (like a recurring decimal). The hop-jig is similar to it but in  $9/8$  time. The only other dance measure is the reel, which is a rapid dance in  $2/4$  time, and, as often as not, infinite like the jig. An excellent specimen is that known as 'The Blackberry Blossom,' which is printed in the Petrie Collection.

The peculiar rhythm with which it is played by Irish fiddlers, an equal insistence upon every quaver in the bar, gives the lilt an extraordinary vitality and *go*.

Scotch music is also rich in dances, but the forms, like the Irish, are limited to jigs and reels. In marches Scotland affects the four-square type, of which the well-known 'Scots wha hae with Willace bled' is a fine specimen. The Welsh follow in the same steps, as witness 'The March of the Men of Harlech.' The jig-march of Ireland may well have been, in practice, of the nature of a war-dance; they were quite capable of producing the four-time march if they chose, as is proved by the very ancient 'Return from Fingal,' a tune of mingled savagery and force which Petrie states to have traditions as far back as the Battle of Clontarf at which King Brian Boromhe was slain. The tunes of the West Highlands of Scotland show the nearest relationship to the Irish style, as is but natural from the close early intercourse between these two islands: but there is a singular absence of the ornamental figures in which Ireland is so rich. Irish Agricultural tunes are most original and characteristic. They are usually termed "Ploughmen's whistles." A magnificent specimen has been trotted out by Thomas Moore in his Irish Melodies to the words of a solemn dirge 'O ye dead,' which he, after his light-hearted manner, so twisted and changed that its original character is almost obliterated. He could not hurt the tune, for so great was it that it wore its unaccustomed clothes as if they were made for it; but the musician who plays the tune through somewhat quickly, and without looking at the poem, will speedily find out the true flavour of its origin. To the same class belong what I may call occupation songs, sung while grinding corn (Quern-tunes), spinning, fishing and so forth. Lastly, as is but natural to humanity, come the largest batch of all, the love-songs and the narrative songs; as varied in their style as the songs of Schubert; even as experimental in rhythmical device as the most modern musician would wish, five-bar and six-bar rhythms being treated with a freedom and a certainty of touch which would be a credit to a master-hand. Their most persistent characteristic is a grouping of phrases which exactly correspond to the four-line stanzas of Tennyson's 'In Memoriam,' where the first line



rhymes with the fourth, and the second with the third. In a great amount of Irish music of the narrative or amative type, the four phrases are similarly balanced; the first and last being the same, and the second and third either the same or a variant of it. The 'Harp that once in Tara's Halls' is a good instance of this. The scheme is sometimes varied by a repetition of the first line, as in 'At the mid hour of night.' It may be set out, prosodically, as follows:



Lines 1, 2 and 5 balance each other, and lines 3 and 4 balance each other and provide the contrast to 1, 2 and 5. I know of no other folk-music which possesses this rhythm, and which has so extraordinary an amount of variety of rhythms at its command.

The English branch, which is (as I have suggested) more akin to the Germanic type as a whole, has nevertheless been affected by the Keltic. Many English tunes show markedly Irish influence, which is not surprising, seeing that so many Irish harvest-labourers have visited England annually and brought their songs with them; probably picking up English tunes in their turn and interlacing them with the Irish characteristics which comes naturally to them. A similar interweaving of national types may be traced in many negro melodies in America. Dvořák's explorations into negro melodies, when he was in New York, give an example of this: for many of the tunes which he used in his compositions of that period are really Irish tunes coloured with a negro brush. The essentially English flavour of the Anglo-Saxon music is a reflex of the nation, four-square, unsophisticated, not prone to sentimentalism or romanticism, go-ahead both in its rhythm and its progressions. A typical instance of concentrated English feeling is 'The British Grenadiers,' one of the best quick march tunes in literature. Another is the old English tune, which is now American property under the name of 'Yankee Doodle.' How the spirit affected the English composer of more recent times may be seen in such typically English songs as Purcell's 'Come if you dare,' and Dr. Arne's 'Rule Britannia,' the first phrase of which was said by Wagner to represent the character of the English nation, and which so captivated him in his early days that he wrote an overture (and a very poor one) upon its theme. The narrative tunes of England are also very numerous, many of these possessing a



quiet charm of their own, such as 'Barbara Ellen,' but they are tame in comparison to their Keltic sisters.

The English take a kind of pride in concealing their feelings and emotions, and this is reflected in their folk-song. The Thames has no rapids and no falls; it winds along under its woods in a gentle stream, never dry and never halting; it is the type of the spirit of English folk-music. There are on the one hand no surprises, on the other no lack of picturesqueness of a quiet and calm sort: but England is as remote from Keltic fire and agony, as the Thames is from the Spey. Its most typical modern representative before the present day was Sterndale Bennett, a composer rightly valued at his true worth by Schumann and by Mendelssohn, and whose compositions have been too much passed by in recent and more rapid blood-and-thunder days. He on the secular side of music and S. S. Wesley on the sacred are curiously enough the only essentially English composers of real mark in the early part of the last century. Henry Purcell must have been of Irish extraction, as his name and innumerable characteristics in his style go far to prove.

In the English school (as in the Germanic) much influence must be credited to the Church. The fine old hymn-tunes dating from Elizabethan and even earlier times may be ranked as folk-songs of a kind: and as such had a marked influence in keeping alive (through the cathedrals) an important section of musical art when external circumstances, such as the Puritan movement, were working so hard to strangle it. These tunes were so engrafted in the English people that it was not possible to extirpate them. Scotland bore its share in keeping the ecclesiastical head above water. Secular music was saved mainly by the exertions of Roger North, who in the Cromwellian times, took care to preserve it in a corner of East Anglia, and aided by the composer John Jenkins (one of the earliest composers of string chamber-music) kept the flag flying. The tortoise retired into its shell in time, put its head out when the danger was past, and the situation was saved.

The power of Slavonic folk-song has only begun to manifest itself outside Russia in the last quarter of a century. We saw flashes of it in Beethoven's quartets, but for Europe it was an unopened and practically unprocurable book. Of its Czech tributary we had more experience, and in Smetana and Dvořák irrefragable evidence of its vitalizing power. The first Russian sign of it was to be found in Glinka, a sign which was for a time obliterated by the second-hand Germanizing influence of Rubinstein, a Hebrew of genius who, like his race, had illimitable cleverness in picking up the characteristics of many nations with which he came



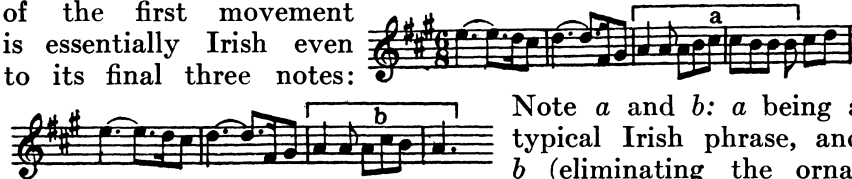
into contact during his international career. Tschaikowsky moved many steps nearer to his own nation, but it was not until Moussorgsky blazed upon the world with 'Boris Godounow' that the immense power and nobility of Russian folk-song made its presence universally felt and extorted a world-wide admiration, even outside the bounds of its own immense country. Moussorgsky's work is an epitome of the national music of his country, and limited as was his output owing to the short duration of his earthly life, he has done more to vivify the interest of the musical ethnographer than any other composer of his country. The day when the world is enriched by as complete and undiluted a collection of Russian folk-songs as has been published of Keltic, will be one deeply rich in interest and fertile in influence. The more modern Russian school is permeated with national music: Borodin, Glazounow, Rachmaninoff, Balakirew (to name only four of the great army) owe their inspiration to their own soil. Even those Russian composers who have been bitten by the tarantula of ugliness never quite lose touch with their base, and their extravagances have a far more genuine and spontaneous touch than those of their Teutonic neighbours. They are experimenting no doubt, and, as enthusiasts will, they may be exceeding the limits of true art in doing so; but they possess a plethora of ideas to work upon, not a poverty of them to conceal, as is the case with the modern Germans.

The Germanic stream is a mighty one. It is not, it is true, in the true sense of the word, romantic, but it is noble, direct, and stimulating. The student songs are the best of their kind anywhere; the church tunes, which are the backbone of their folk-literature, are the embodiment of the best points of the Teutonic race. Upon these were such men as Schütz and Sebastian Bach suckled and brought up, and they stand out clearly in all the finest work of the country down to Wagner and Brahms. Since then the influence of German folk-song has been on the decline, as my Leipzig friend truly said. In its nature entirely unsophisticated, it is being tortured into chemical combinations which are eliminating all its best and most inherent characteristics. Richard Strauss has given in 'Till Eugenspiegel' a typical specimen of this process. Beginning with a more or less undiluted specimen of folk-song, he launches out into permutations and combinations which entirely obliterate its memory from the mind of the listener, and at the close perforce repeats it again to save his skin. The mass of the composition is ignorant of it, and refuses to consider any connection with it save in a distorted and unnatural guise. A comparison of this method with such noble specimens as the figured chorales of Bach, or even



with the treatment of student songs by Brahms in his *Akademische Fest* overture, will show the wide gulf fixed between the loyal and disloyal treatment of folk-song. It may of course be alleged that 'Till Eugenspiegel' is a joke, and that the initial tune is but a quasi-folk-song, meant to be maltreated like the hero. This argument holds if the hearer is prepared to sacrifice good taste to a laugh; but it is on a par with Berlioz' 'Amen' in the *Damnation of Faust*. The laugh is shamefaced when it emerges from the sleeve. Very few outside the Fatherland have seen the same composer's arrangements of songs for the German army. Those that have will wonder whether the performance of them on the march has to be enforced by the revolvers of the officers in the rear. Abt could do and did better. He was not a high-class composer but he was canny enough in his *métier* to treat simple tunes with simplicity. The best collections of German folk-song, such as those by Reimann and Max Friedländer, are in all respects worthy of the material: the best of all the literature of the nation came under the purview of Johannes Brahms, whose handling of them needs no eulogy from me.

It is a matter of no little interest to a student of Irish music, to notice how contact with it affected the great Netherlander, Beethoven himself<sup>1</sup>; it is of course a matter of history that he arranged many Irish, Scotch and English airs for Thomson of Edinburgh. It is true that he Beethovenized them far more than they Kelticized him. But shortly after he made the arrangements, or indeed perhaps concurrently with his work upon them, he wrote his Seventh Symphony in A. Not many critics have noticed the strongly Irish characteristics in it. The theme of the first movement is essentially Irish even to its final three notes:



Note *a* and *b*: *a* being a typical Irish phrase, and *b* (eliminating the ornamental surroundings) the three heavy repetitions of the Irish Cadence. The whole movement is in jig rhythm. The last movement is still closer to the Irish and contains a quotation from a well-known tune. It is a reel pure and simple, though gigantic in structure. The first theme is a 2/4 version of the final phrase of 'Kitty of Coleraine.'



This tune was arranged by Beethoven, who in the last "symphony"

<sup>1</sup>The Beethovens were a Louvain family: the last representative of the name died at Antwerp.



of the song took this part of the theme and treated it thus:



Compare the 7th Symphony:



At all events Beethoven could not be charged with another injustice to Ireland. Kitty of Coleraine little dreamed that she would be numbered among the immortal Nine.

Of the Hungarian folk-song there is not much to say which has not already been said well and often. It suffers from a certain monotony of rhythm, the insistence upon— $\cup$ —, which makes its songs far from easy to interpret out of the national language. The labours of Francis Korbay did most to bring the songs within outside ken. Liszt did a certain amount and that with patriotic piety. Brahms popularized the dances, and throughout his life was greatly influenced by the Magyar idiom, using it in chamber-music, and in the Finale of his Pianoforte Concerto in B flat. Oddly enough it has not produced a great composer of its own nation, unless some may consider Liszt to be of the category, a belief which is usually confined to his own pupils and to those who came into close contact with his magnetic personality, but which was most certainly not shared in by his friend Wagner. Wagner was politic enough to praise his work on paper, but men who have spoken with him have told me that he was very far indeed from doing so when his real opinions were expressed in the sanctity of private conversation.

Of the other nations the most fruitful have been the Tyrolean, the Scandinavian and the Italian. The Tyrol produced one of the greatest of all, Mozart; its close neighbour Croatia another giant, Haydn: both permeated with folk-song characteristics. Scandinavia has begun more recently, Grieg and Svendsen being the most striking figures. Modern Italy is teeming with the flavour of its people's song. There is not a page of Verdi that does not bubble over with their influence: and the lesser lights of today in spite of efforts after realistic expression have all drunk copiously at the national spring. Where the love for a nation's songs is nurtured, there are the great possibilities of a nation's artistic welfare. "Honour thy father and thy mother" is a commandment which applies to the children of Music as well as to the home. The days of a nation in the world of music which obeys it will always be long on the earth.